



# The Collatio: An Instrument for Personal and Communal Growth

by Odette Gashabana

St. Zaccaria



**The *Collatio*:**  
**An Instrument for Personal and**  
**Communal Growth**

**Collection no. 1**

# **Zaccarian Spirituality Collection**

**THE *COLLATIO*:**

**AN INSTRUMENT FOR PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL GROWTH**

**THREE-DAY RETREAT WITH ST. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA**

**SAINT ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA AND LUKEWARMNESS**

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL:**

**THE “PAULISM” OF ST. ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA**

**SAINT ANTHONY MARY ZACCARIA: THE PAINTING THAT SAYS IT ALL**

**The *Collatio*:  
An Instrument for Personal and  
Communal Growth**

*Odette Gashabana*

Translated from the Italian by  
Fr. Frank M. Papa, CRSP

Collection no. 1



**Barnabite Publications**

*Zaccarian Spirituality Collection*

Originally published in 1997 in Italian under the title “La collazione: uno strumento per la crescita personale e comunitaria.” in *Quaderni di vita Barnabita* no.10, pp. 191–210.

*Imprimi potest*

Fr. Robert B. M. Kosek, CRSP, Provincial Superior  
Bethlehem, February 18, 2013

Copyright © 2013 Clerics Regular of St. Paul - BARNABITES

**Compiled and Edited by:**

Fr. Robert B. M. Kosek, CRSP  
Sr. Rorivic Ma. P. Israel, ASP

Book layout and cover design by Greg Gambino

**BARNABITE PUBLICATIONS**

Barnabite Spiritual Center  
4301 Hecktown Road  
Bethlehem PA 18020, USA

**E-mail:** BarnabitePublications@gmail.com

**Visit us online to view more eBarnabite Publications**

[www.scribd.com/barnabitepublications](http://www.scribd.com/barnabitepublications)







## Contents

Compilers' Note . . . . .	xi
Introduction . . . . .	1
A. Collatio: A Spiritual Conference . . . . .	2
1. The Meaning of the Word Collatio . . . . .	2
2. John Cassian and His Conferences . . . . .	3
John Cassian . . . . .	3
His Works . . . . .	4
Cassian's Spiritual Doctrine . . . . .	6
B. The Collatio as a Spiritual Conference . . . . .	7
1. Preliminary Remarks on the First Constitutions . . . . .	7
2. The Collatio According to St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria . . . . .	8
The Reformer . . . . .	8
The Collatio . . . . .	9
The Collatio in Chapter IX of the Constitutions . . . . .	9
Dynamic Vision of the Collatio . . . . .	12
The "Growth" Concept of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria . . . . .	13
Collatio as a Means of Growth . . . . .	13
Victory over Oneself . . . . .	14
To Grow Together . . . . .	15
To Announce an Energetic Spirituality Everywhere . . . . .	19
The First Missions . . . . .	19
The Collatio in the Missions. . . . .	20
The Collatio in the New Evangelization. . . . .	21
Sermons or Collationes – by Fr. Giuseppe Cagni, CRSP. . . . .	23



## **Compilers' Note**

After years of collaborative work, we have finally realized this collection of Zaccarian spirituality. Our common aspiration—the reason for this collection—is to propagate St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria's ever actual and enduring spiritual patrimony among English readers.

Featured in this collection are articles written by acknowledged members of our religious families. Their valuable contribution entwined with ours makes this collection a unique family composition.

We anticipate that this collection will be a source of dynamic spiritual influence for anyone who intends to live his life according to the example and teachings of our holy founder, St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria.

Fr. Robert B. M. Kosek, CRSP and Sr. Rorivic P. Israel, ASP  
Bethlehem- Milan, Feb. 20, 2013  
Commemoration of the Presbyteral Ordination of  
St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria



## Introduction

The purpose of the *collatio*, according to St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, is “to eradicate the roots of vices...to acquire the true and real, not imaginary, virtues” (Constitutions, IX).

This study is not a theoretical or historical reflection; rather, it is an attempt to realize, in a practical way, the fruit of our meditation, so that we can fully restore this healthy tradition of ours and make it once again a “most effective means of reform.” Let us recall how our saint admonishes us: “Know, therefore, brothers, that everything will go to ruin every time you omit this *collatio*. If you continue to have it with affection and avidity, and not only by habit, you will prosper” (Constitutions, IX).

We will discuss the *collatio* according to the following scheme:

- First of all, we will study the origin and meaning of the word *collatio*, since this uncommon term is used primarily by dedicated students of the spiritual life
- Then, we will analyze the title of this paper, emphasizing the dynamic aspect of the *collatio* as an instrument for personal and communal growth
- We will also try to understand how this venerable institution from the Desert Fathers was adopted and practiced by Anthony Mary and his followers, who thus mysteriously anticipated the modern emphasis on communicating and exchanging the faith so as to foster Christian communion and transform the ordinary believer into an apostle of Truth
- Finally, we will consider how we can be a “Church in preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Third Millennium,” and how we, children of Anthony Mary, can best interpret and live out the centennial of our

holy founder's canonization, so that we may become in the Church "a presence which renews itself" and which is ready to enter the new millennium with a heart inspired by the new evangelization

### **A. Collatio: A Spiritual Conference**

The word "collatio" is almost never used in the modern language. More often, the word causes wonderment in those who hear it for the first time. We will thus imitate the ancient theologians, who were careful to explain their terminology before they made any discourse.

#### ***1. The Meaning of the Word Collatio***

Collatio is a Latin word that means *confrontation, verification, comparison* between two or more copies of literary texts, documents, or books.

Today, the word collatio does not have the same meaning as in ancient times, because our printed books have exactly the same text (mistakes included) in all the copies. In earlier ages, books were handwritten, and mistakes were inevitable: scribes would misread some words in the original text, or substitute words they thought were best, or omit a paragraph because nearby lines contained similar words, or accidentally jump from one line to another. Consequently, once a book was finished, a collatio was performed to verify the copied text with the original. This was a long and monotonous procedure, but it was nonetheless essential in ensuring the accuracy of a text. To make the task more manageable, two or three monks would often work together: one would read the original text and the others would verify the copy and, if needed, correct it.

It was only natural to apply this practical technique to spiritual matters. The monks would gather together to correct, not a text this time, but their way of life—they would perform a *collatio* between their lives and some authoritative guide, such as the Gospel, the teachings of the abbot, or the example of saintly monks. The *collatio* became a deeply communal activity, and thus, in the Middle Ages, *collatio* also meant “work done in a group.” In a meeting or chapter, the monks would work together to organize, amend, and develop their plan for a common journey toward perfection. This is the meaning we now give to the term *collatio*, which became particularly well known because John Cassian used it as the title for one of his most beautiful spiritual works.

## ***2. John Cassian and His Conferences***

Our holy founder and his followers were deeply familiar with this great master of the spiritual life; they studied his works, in private and in common, and more importantly, they put his teachings into practice. Hence, knowledge about Cassian is part of our spiritual heritage.

### ***John Cassian***

We can summarize the story of John Cassian’s life by making use of the sparse biographical information he left in his own writings.

He was born around the year 360, perhaps in Scythia, to a wealthy family. He must have received a good education during his youth, for he was familiar with Latin and Greek. One of his classmates was a certain Germanus. The two developed a strong spiritual friendship and came to share the monastic ideal. They both went to the Orient, living first in Bethlehem, then in Egypt, then back in Palestine, and finally in Constantinople, where the bishop, St. John Chrysostom, incardinated them into his clergy, ordaining Germanus a priest and

John a deacon.

It is likely that Cassian and Germanus then established themselves in a monastery outside the city where they could live the Egyptian monastic life, of which they had gained much experience during the fifteen years they spent in contact with the most famous abbots of the time. But when St. John Chrysostom, who was being persecuted by his adversaries, had to leave the city and go into exile, the two friends traveled to Rome to bring the pope proof of their bishop's innocence.

Germanus died while they were in Rome, and Cassian may have received Holy Orders during this time. In 415 Cassian founded in Marseilles two monasteries: one for women, dedicated to the Holy Savior, and one for men, dedicated to St. Peter. He longed to retire into seclusion and prayer, but his spiritual children forced him to take up his pen and write about the experiences and spiritual teachings he had gathered from Oriental monastic life.

John Cassian died in Marseilles between 430 and 435. The city honors him as a saint and celebrates his feast on July 23.

### ***His Works***

John Cassian condensed a vast treasury of knowledge into only three books: one with theological and dogmatic subjects entitled *De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium*, and the other two with a monastic spiritual character entitled *Institutiones* and *Collationes*.

Cassian wrote *De Incarnatione Domini* near the end of his life upon the insistence of Leo, the archdeacon in Rome and later Pope St. Leo the Great. In this work, Cassian affirms the two natures in the one person of Christ against the Nestorian heresy, which insisted upon two natures in two corresponding persons. It is important to note that it was written in 430, that is, before the Council of Ephesus condemned the doctrine of Nestorius.



*Institutiones* was Cassian's first spiritual book, written from 417 to 418. It deals with the structure and spiritual discipline of the ancient monastic life. The first four chapters consider the monk in his "external" aspects: the habit, the night psalmody according to the Egyptian tradition, the day psalmody according to the Palestinian and Mesopotamian traditions, the organization of life in common, and the virtues corresponding to this communal life. The other eight chapters address the "internal" aspects of the monk—primarily his fight against the capital vices, which according to Cassian are eight in number, as he includes also melancholy. The fight against these vices should lead the monk to purification of the heart and, therefore, to interior freedom.

*Collationes*, the book we are presently concerned with, was composed in 425. There are twenty-four *collationes* divided into three groups. Unfortunately, modern translations use the term "conferences" instead of *collationes*, which better retains the meaning explained above. In fact, many of these *collationes* are indeed true dialogues in which the monks are free to share and discuss.

In this book, Cassian offers, in concentrated form, his extensive experience with Oriental monastic life; this experience was the fruit of long years of pilgrimages he made from one monastery to another as he sought better knowledge of the life and spirituality of various monastic communities. The book contains nothing else but the content of meetings that were intended to allow the monks to perform a *collatio*, that is, to compare their lives with the great ideals of classical monastic life.

The book is a true "treatise on Christian perfection," written not in a theoretical form but in a practical one, and illuminated by the examples and teachings of the great Oriental monks. It is precisely because of this practical approach that the holy founder loved this book so much; with it in hand he continued the tradition of the *collatio*, both by himself and with his followers. Father Battista Soresina wrote

the following in his *Attestations*: “Father Zaccaria had great esteem for *Collationes* and the other works of John Cassian, and he used them extensively in the collatio.” And the Angelic Paola Antonia Sfondrati says in her *Historia*, “Blessed John Cassian was the principal master of this our new school.”

### ***Cassian’s Spiritual Doctrine***

Cassian’s life and works provide us with a vivid portrait of his spirituality. Let us then look at his youthful years, as he searched, together with his friend Germanus, for the authentic way that leads to communion with God.

Cassian identified two categories of monks: hermits and coenobites. In so doing, he helps us to understand that the way of the Lord is not easy—man must persevere through an exhausting and perilous journey in order to reach his God. He says that the immediate end of both the active, or coenobitic, life and the hermitic life is to correct one’s customs and to bring to perfection every aspect of life.

Cassian asserts that to obtain this end, along with purification of the heart and perfect charity, the monk must completely and sincerely renounce himself and the world. As he advances to this exalted state, the monk will begin to savor moments of contemplation, which in time will become continuous—such is the gift of God to those who abandon themselves completely to Him.

Cassian compares perfection to a mountain: “At the top is the hermitic life, at the slopes the coenobitic life. Just as one cannot reach the top of a mountain in an instant, but only through a long and arduous journey, no one can reach the perfection of hermitic life without passing through the purification and harshness of coenobitic life.” Perhaps it was here that Zaccaria found the idea for his doctrine of a gradual ascent to God. Cassian’s works have nourished the spiritual lives of monks and religious of every time and age, and the

Barnabites and Angelics are no exception. The Rule of St. Benedict says that Cassian's *Collationes* "are nothing else but examples and instruments of virtues offered to obedient monks who desire to live well."

We know that St. Dominic was also a reader and admirer of Cassian: "He used to read often that book of the Fathers entitled *Collationes*, and having discovered in it the path leading to salvation, he reached a high degree of perfection." Saint Thomas Aquinas read the *Collationes* to "strengthen his spirit and to make it more ready in the search for truth."

Saint Anthony Mary, our holy founder, specifically used the word *collatio*; indeed, he made it his own and emphasized its importance. We will now look into his doctrine to arrive at some practical conclusions.

## **B. The Collatio as a Spiritual Conference**

### ***1. Preliminary Remarks on the First Constitutions***

The sons and daughters of Anthony Mary are well aware that though their Father was full of zeal and fervor, he was not excessively worried about writing Constitutions or some other set of challenging rules and norms. What are considered as the first Constitutions drafted by the holy founder were never officially promulgated or proposed; rather, they were rules he first envisioned for himself and only later put into writing.

Let us try to understand the mind of our saint. His approach was to first live out in daily life the rules he might later include in his Constitutions: as Zaccaria himself describes it in a letter to the Sons of Paul, "It is well and good to have a written obedience, that is, a written command of your superiors, but it is of little good if it is not written in

your minds” (Letter VII).

The first generations of the Zaccarian family desired a more formal expression of their spirituality and mission, and as a result they attempted to organize the holy founder’s Constitutions into nineteen chapters. Fortunately, some of these chapters have already been studied in depth, but some still need to be reviewed. We will analyze Chapter IX and try to understand how it became an instrument for spiritual growth at the time of our holy founder.

## ***2. The Collatio According to St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria***

### ***The Reformer***

If we want to penetrate into the mind of Anthony Mary, we must resist the tendency to isolate him from his time. The sixteenth century was an era of crisis: Years of internal disorders—such as the worldly attitudes of prelates, the misdirected temporal power of the Roman Curia, and corruption within religious orders—had weakened and defiled God’s Church, which was now faced with the Protestant revolt and the corresponding need for widespread ecclesiastical and spiritual renewal. Groups of laypeople and clerics were demanding the reform of the Christian community “at the head and among its members.” Anthony Mary was among those who thought that the only way to reform the Church was to first reform oneself: “It is worthless to fight in a lost battle, without possibility of success; let us renew ourselves.” Anthony Mary understood that to achieve lasting renewal, it would be better to form a group of men and women who were fully committed to personal reform and who loved and proclaimed the Gospel through new forms of Christian witness. By encouraging a communal expression of simple yet fervent evangelical piety, he would create the foundations for the reform of society and the Church. And so Anthony Mary conceived the collatio as that moment of encounter

which favors vitality of the spirit, apostolic fervor, contempt for lukewarmness, and fidelity to one's commitments.

### ***The Collatio***

The collatio is understood by Anthony Mary as a "meeting of the community for a daily revision of life, both spiritual and disciplinary" (*Handbook for the Spirit*, 127). In this meeting, all are invited to cooperate in "how to eradicate the roots of vices, how to acquire the true and real, not imaginary, virtues. You should talk about the help and providence of God and of the angels, about the diabolic deceits, and about the perfection of life and the summit of virtues" (Constitutions, IX).

Here, we can see that Anthony Mary retains both the patristic and medieval meaning of the collatio, but he also specifies the purpose of the meeting and the commitment of each member to seek God not only on their own but also in union with the others. This implies the intense seriousness that characterized the meeting, in which the saint joined the juridical and disciplinary elements of the reform with the ascetic and mystical elements, such that the mind of the reformer could exert its influence on daily life.

### ***The Collatio in Chapter IX of the Constitutions***

We should take note of the place Chapter IX holds in the Constitutions of the holy founder: the previous chapter deals with Sacred Scripture and the following chapter deals with prayer.

"The brothers ought to study Sacred Scripture, and avidly take delight in understanding and comprehending it so as to uncover and bring to light its hidden meanings, especially those conducive to moral instruction" (Constitutions, VIII). From this we understand that Sacred Scripture was the principal source of Anthony Mary's spiritual thought, and thus Sacred Scripture was the force that animated the

daily meetings. Indeed, it was in reference to Scripture that they performed the collatio, for only in Scripture does one find the strength for interior renewal and the energy for the spiritual journey.

Chapter X emphasizes the importance of mental prayer during and after the meeting: “He who does not dedicate himself to it and does not find delight in it—I say—will inevitably make no progress, even though he might mumble many psalms and other prayers all day long.”

As we examine Chapter X, we see that the holy founder specifies the following points:

1. *Participation by all.* The whole community had to be present in the collatio. Even the gardeners and guests who were not members of the Zaccarian family were expected to participate. The Capitular Acts of the Barnabites attest to the presence of these outsiders, who were allowed to ask and speak like the rest.

2. *Duration.* The holy founder says “for at least an hour.” However, we know that the collatio would sometimes continue for an entire morning or afternoon.

3. *Frequency.* The holy founder says “daily,” and it is possible that while he was alive there was indeed a collatio held every day. After his death, they were held at least on Wednesdays and Fridays, as recorded in the Capitular Acts of the Barnabites. We do not know how often the Angelics gathered for the collatio because their Capitular Acts have been lost; as for the laity, we will see later that they were performing the collatio on Sundays and feast days.

4. *Themes.* They were generally practical: the “eradication of the roots of vices”; the acquisition of “true and real, not imaginary, virtues”; the “help and providence of God and of the angels”; guarding against “diabolic deceits”; pursuing “the perfection of life and the summit of virtues.” Only rarely did the holy founder allow such themes as the “benefits of the Christian republic,” which relates to

how society can be improved—but even this had to be treated from the perspective (as he says) “of the customs and the pure honor of Christ,” so that they would not digress into human and social affairs.

5. *The method.* The holy founder often preferred a detailed and profound analysis of the subjects. As a good doctor, he knew that illnesses can be healed only when the causes are known and eliminated. Here is the procedure he suggests: “You will also treat the causes and occasions by which good morals deteriorate and bad morals generate; the signs that precede the deterioration or the birth of good or bad morals; also, which good results from good tendencies, and which evil by chance comes from them; which evil is caused by bad tendencies, and which good originates from them; what are the causes of fervor and lukewarmness, and their characteristics and summit; what are the causes of the emptiness of the mind, and of its stability and instability” (Constitutions, IX). We notice how the saint uses the word “cause.” This is exactly why he gives the recommendation to “hold the collatio two or more times on the same subject, until it is well understood”—to ensure that the root causes are addressed.

6. *The style.* Zaccaria insisted that the collatio be extremely practical, clear, and pertinent, without affectation of erudition or eloquence. It must be simple and appealing, following the example of the Fathers of the Church.

7. *Defects to be avoided.* Those participating in the collatio should avoid aggression, devious words, backbiting, arrogance, laughing at someone who expresses himself poorly, and fixating on the mistakes of the confreres.

8. *Final exhortation.* The participants should make a record of the most beautiful and significant thoughts that they have shared, so that “after a certain time...you could again read over what has been written” (Constitutions, IX).

The holy founder does not say how the hour was organized, but

from the description in the Capitular Acts of the Barnabites and from the analysis of his sermons—which, according to a recent opinion, were nothing else but an introduction to the collatio itself—we can say that the following was the scheme:

- After the opening prayer to the Holy Spirit, the presider gives a talk on the chosen theme in the light of the Word of God and the experiences of daily life
- Next, the Word is given to the assembly. Everyone shares his thoughts and offers some practical resolutions
- Finally, they choose two or three resolutions that they all will seek to incorporate into their personal lives

The most demanding parts, and the ones to which they would dedicate most of their time, were the reflection, the discussion, and the sharing of experiences; indeed, these moments were truly a school of collective maturation, resembling a continuous course of “permanent formation.”

### ***Dynamic Vision of the Collatio***

The collatio as a method that favors vitality of the spirit, apostolic fervor, contempt for lukewarmness, and fidelity to one’s commitments is characterized by a dynamic aspect that leads to personal and communal growth.

Spiritual progress takes place through a continuous encounter between the grace given by God and man’s response to this grace. Thus, spiritual progress is both a gift and a task.

Anthony Mary, who often used the terminology of spiritual “growth,” perceived the process of sanctification as an ongoing journey in which the soul becomes increasingly united to Christ as it gradually discovers God as the center of the human experience and the ultimate Good for which the heart yearns.



### ***The “Growth” Concept of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria***

In the Zaccarian lexicon, the term “growth” is pervasive: “growing toward greater perfection...a constant growth...grow continuously...in virtue, so that passing from one virtue to another, he would reach the highest degree of virtue” (*Handbook*, 56).

For Anthony Mary, “growth” is a specific term that describes progress in the spiritual life: “To not make progress on the way to God, and to stand still, is the same as going backward” (Sermon VI). Anthony Mary is uncompromising about this ceaseless journey toward perfection: “Teach the novices...that to not make progress is to regress” (Constitutions, XII).

The saint also employed other verbs to express the journey of the spiritual life: to go, to ascend, to increase, to run. This clearly demonstrates that Anthony Mary does not tolerate anyone who “stands still” or remains passive. To be busy and not wasting time in the spiritual life is the secret to one’s journey toward God and neighbor. Another element necessary for spiritual growth is consistency. Consistency, which is an essential yet dynamic aspect of the spiritual life, constitutes the fundamental law that will help us to achieve interior progress.

Let us now see how the collatio can be a means of growth on the personal, communal, and apostolic level.

### ***Collatio as a Means of Growth***

In the conclusion of Chapter IX of the Constitutions, Anthony Mary offers the following admonition: “Know, therefore, brothers, that everything will go to ruin every time you omit this collatio; if you continue to have it with affection and avidity, and not only by habit, you will prosper.” Now we ask ourselves: Are we performing the collatio in our communities? How are we doing it? Do we receive it with affection and avidity, or do we approach it as something merely ordinary?

It is necessary for us to examine our consciences in regards to our weekly meetings: to reflect upon our spiritual growth in reference to well-known paths to holiness; to determine if the collatio is still an effective means of sanctification; and to confirm that the collatio is still leading us to “victory over oneself” and to communal growth, so that we may be able “to proclaim everywhere an energetic and zealous spirit” (Letter V).

### ***Victory over Oneself***

Anthony Mary takes the expression “victory over oneself” from the book *Cognitione et vittoria di se stesso*, written by his spiritual father Fra Battista da Crema. The collatio, then, as an instrument, takes into consideration the personal, conscious, and voluntary commitment of the person toward his own edification—a commitment which nevertheless can only be achieved through God’s help. Let us remember that after the discussion and sharing in the collatio, the whole group would make a commitment, as individuals and as a community, to carry out the truths they had meditated. At this point, they understand that the “victory over oneself” is the very purpose of the true Christian life and that everyone is called to it on a personal level.

In the program he outlines for the Angelics, Anthony Mary encourages them to not lose heart in their attempt to claim victory over themselves; he repeats the same exhortation to the Barnabites when he invites them to be their “own master...and [to] be committed to the victory over oneself” (Letter VII). To the laity he says that “passions are in man for his great benefit, and to fight and conquer them is a great crown” (Sermon V). The collatio teaches us that the spiritual journey is characterized by a commitment in which discipline and fortitude lead us to victory over self. Furthermore, only by confronting the Word of God can one enter “into knowledge of and familiarity

with God” (Constitutions, XII).

Our cooperation is simply our free and total adherence to God, which is the fruit of self-control, moral courage, and supernatural charity. This moral effort in the spiritual realm makes us increasingly able to benefit from God’s gifts.

This dynamic Christian life—in which the soul longs ever more fervently for God—can only be fruitful if we share it with others.

### ***To Grow Together***

In his charismatic intuition for reform, Anthony Mary knew the value of associating himself with other people (particularly Bartolomeo Ferrari and Giacomo Antonio Morigia); later, he would bring to life groups that were seriously committed to the renewal of spirituality and religious fervor—the “three institutes,” or the “sons and stock of Paul.” These groups constituted one family, with the same rights and duties, and they shared the same spiritual journey, though each retained its specific character: “All assembled will discuss how to eradicate the roots of vices, how to acquire the true and real, not imaginary, virtues.”

This exhortation of Anthony Mary makes us understand that the Zaccarian family was fundamentally united, and together they pursued the same ideal: the renewal of Christian fervor.

It is well known that the collatio and the chapter meetings were greatly valued for their role in building up the community. During the collatio, as with the early Christians, the Pauline families would share their natural and supernatural gifts as they tried to help each other make progress toward God (see Letter VI).

The collatio as a means of communal growth led the children of Anthony Mary to look into the roots of vices. Their commitment was to remove these insidious roots, for they knew that an evil tree will continue to sprout until it is thoroughly uprooted. We need to

search for the deep causes of the evil hidden within the concupiscence of human nature. And once the roots of vices are destroyed, the roots of virtues can be planted.

Planting the roots is not enough, though. Much labor and attention are required to bring the new tree to fruition, and likewise we see that ongoing exhortation and catechesis are necessary to ensure that the soul perseveres in its journey toward God. Certainly there is no desire to coerce the soul, but each member must have an open mind in order to profit from the wisdom of others.

It could be said that the collatio helped the children of Anthony Mary to understand the proverb “unity is strength, in all areas.” They shared the commitment to become saints, and they felt the need to give to each other a clear witness of their experience of God. Community life then was lived as a true relationship in which each member helped the others to grow in the love of God and neighbor.

This is still true today: Christ’s love should bring us together, so that together we can respond to the love of the Father, loving Him “with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole strength” (Dt 6:5) and loving our neighbor “as ourselves.”

After reading about the collatio as it was done at the time of our holy founder, we naturally wonder how it is practiced by us today. One element that should be emphasized is the sharing. To share means to accept the contributions of others. Sharing one’s thoughts with the community helps to ensure that the spiritual profit is enjoyed by the entire community rather than only one individual.

In order to strengthen the community’s commitment to sanctification, the following points must be observed during the collatio:

- Listen carefully, with interest and simplicity of heart
- Share your thoughts. Saint Basil says, “The energy of the spirit present in one person passes to another. Not only one

person then profits from his own gift—his gift is multiplied in sharing it with others, and so everyone enjoys the fruit of the gift of the others as his own”

- Review and evaluate what you have shared
- Think and plan together

In the collatio, each member should share his thoughts and experiences so that the community can reach perfection together. Our Constitutions do indeed leave full freedom to all, to share or not, and thus no one should feel compelled. Nevertheless, each member should realize the importance of sharing and strive for generosity in opening his mind and heart to those who are joining him on life’s spiritual journey.

This spiritual encounter should be natural and comfortable so that each member is able to speak without fear or intimidation and freely share the inspirations that the Holy Spirit has granted him.

The holy founder himself says, “Absolutely, have no arguments; if it should be good for you, listen to the opinion of the humble and the simple ones, careful not to mock them because they say little about the subject, or share it in a poor way; instead, we have to have compassion for them, and recognize ourselves in them, since what we have is not ours” (Constitutions, IX).

Despite the right and the duty to participate in the collatio, some, unfortunately, are silent and passive. Also, some abuse this moment of grace and edification by pinpointing a specific behavior through general statements, whereas the true spiritual benefit of each member is better served if the community can analyze this behavior and identify its causes. These causes are sometimes personal, at other times they are inherent in the chosen approach to the collatio. These causes may also be due to improvisation, or the lack of preparation, or bad timing, or due to an unfavorable atmosphere created by tension in the community. By not analyzing the behavior with the community,

one runs the risk of perpetuating an individualistic spirituality, which is not Zaccarian and which does not accord with the modern emphasis on spiritual growth through deep interpersonal relationships.

This individualistic spirituality is manifested as excessive concern for one's personal spiritual journey along with a closed, confrontational attitude toward the community. This is not the way to live as a community; fixation on self leads to competition and disunity among members. The integration of each member into the group is the basis of a healthy community; without it, the encounter with God will be an illusion because it lacks the experience of profound communion. Anthony Mary says, "Our neighbor is the one who receives what we cannot give to God, who does not need any of our goods" (Letter II).

We must also be aware that man by nature is a social being, open toward others. A person who is enclosed in himself is living contrary to his own nature. The more he freely opens himself to others, the more he forms himself as a truly free person. When his openness toward others becomes a free act of love, communicated in trust, others will have then encountered in him a person with whom to communicate.

It is interesting to note the practical approach of the holy founder in detecting the causes of uncomfortable situations. Speaking to the visitor, who is expected to correct defects and hear "the complaints of the confreres," the holy founder recommends that he not punish anyone who complains but rather clarify his reasons for complaining. And the saint adds, "Complaints never come from nothing; they are always a fruit of a previous defect."

Let us go back to our beginnings! For those who want to grow together, the collatio is an excellent way to facilitate communication and dialogue in the community. By sharing, we pass from the "I and you" to the "we," from our personal commitment to the commitment of the community, from our own search for personal things to our

search for Christ. The closer we are to each other in the community, the closer we are to God—one with Him, one community in the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore long for this unity, so that we may truly become a community of love that testifies to the depth and richness of the Trinitarian mystery. And let us not deprive ourselves of the transforming power of the collatio.

***To Announce an Energetic Spirituality Everywhere***

The collatio as a means of “announcing Christ” should be for us a subject of serious reflection. As we meditate on how the collatio was used during the first missions of the Zaccarian family, we ask ourselves: How can the collatio be useful for us today as we dedicate ourselves to the new evangelization?

***The First Missions***

The first mission undertaken by the Zaccarian family was the result of an invitation from the bishop of Vicenza, Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi, who was familiar with the Paulines and their charism. Eventually missions in Vicenza, Verona, and Venice became a favored field for the apostolic action of the “sons and stock of Paul.” Their aim was to banish lukewarmness from the hearts of men and women and to spread everywhere an energetic spirituality; with “noble dedication” (Letter V) they followed a rigid but accepted discipline resting on three pillars: the Crucified Lord, contempt for oneself, and the conversion and perfection of others.

The reform was not an easy task, and it required persons who were prepared to devote their lives to it. Anthony Mary, before sending his children out, would thoroughly prepare and form them. One of these intense moments of formation is found in Letter V, sent to the Angelic Sisters shortly before they left for the mission to Vicenza. He exhorted his daughters “to find great progress as...[they] compete

with one another” in love of God and neighbor. They must try to “overcome their irrational sadness, some the morbidity of their spirit, some the fear of not making progress, some the sense of loss in the attempt to overcome themselves, some their stubbornness, some their distractions, some one thing, some another.” Only in this way would they inspire “progress not only in [themselves]...but also in others” (Letter VI).

Anthony Mary relied greatly on the good will and commitment of his daughters, because “the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete...teaching you everything, will not allow you to err; He will not allow you to be discouraged, because He will always be with you” (Letter V). In Letter VII, addressed to the Barnabites two years after the opening of the mission, Anthony Mary reminds them that the mission is no mere youthful adventure and that nothing can be accomplished by relying only on human reasoning—“it is the Crucified Lord who entrusts to us the care of souls, promising to accompany not only any of our words, but also our holy intentions.”

The holy founder insists that when one exhausts himself in order to gain others for Christ, his own imperfections will be consumed. It is evident, therefore, that one’s sacrifice and generosity in this commitment contribute greatly to one’s purification.

### ***The Collatio in the Missions***

There is no doubt that the Zaccarian family was holding the collatio in the missions. For the Barnabites, the Angelics, and the Married of St. Paul, this practice was a true instrument for conversion and sanctification. Sfondrati recorded that places were specially reserved for the collatio: “The houses were close to the hospital, which was used purposely for these encounters and meetings.” The doors were not closed but wide open. Anyone could participate, even the curious, who often became truly enthusiastic. Indeed, the Venetian



nobility, according to Sfondrati, spent more time with the Paulines than in their own homes: “There followed a marvelous profit for the nobles of both sexes, who were becoming close to them and who were making the most of this life among them: frequenting the Sacraments, despising all vanities, renewing their families, making most fruitful the spiritual collatio, and exerting themselves in pious works.” “In these spiritual collatio,” Sfondrati continues, “they did not speak about common spirituality but about lofty spirituality and perfection; they did the collatio every Sunday and feast day; the participants committed themselves to daily meditation, to some moments of prayer during the day, to the reform of their own families, and to works of charity. It was truly edifying to see nobles and rich people, so used to being served, come to the hospital and serve with their own hands the sick in their most humbling needs. From the collatio, the Gospel was translated into practical life.”

The work of our early brothers and sisters should be not only an object of admiration and veneration but also an example that provokes us into action.

### ***The Collatio in the New Evangelization***

The Church has always needed missionaries, but today there is a particular need for a new evangelization. Though the call to missionary action belongs to all the baptized, consecrated persons have a special duty to spread the Faith. As Paulines, we must never be complacent; rather, let us always affirm the urgent appeal of St. Paul: “The love of Christ compels us” (2 Cor 5:14).

Of course we are eager to respond without hesitation to the appeal of the Church, but where do we start? How do we proceed?

The new evangelization corresponds to the needs of modern society, which is already Christianized—it knows Jesus Christ and His teachings—but which is lost in a sea of lukewarmness and

indifference. The “new” evangelization seeks to reawaken the faith of the countless Christians who have turned away from Jesus Christ and strayed from the path of virtue. This monumental task is as yet only beginning, and few initiatives are consciously directed toward it. One of the keys to the success of the new evangelization is the sort of zealous determination that characterized St. Anthony Mary’s efforts for renewal. For the Zaccarian family, which is already committed to the conversion of society and the fight against lukewarmness, the new evangelization should be nothing out of the ordinary. The “new vigor” and the intensification of our life of faith through intimate union with Christ—the true Author of any evangelization—depend on our personal and communal commitment. Our efforts will help us to obtain better knowledge of ourselves and the spiritual “rebirth” of others—that we may all put on the “new man” in Jesus Christ, who is the true cause of all renewal. Since we share in Christ’s divine sonship, we must live as good and faithful sons of the Most High God.

As living members of the Church, we are called to spread Christ’s message using new and innovative methods. But in searching for these methods, we need not look outside the Church. The legacy left to us by the holy founder is more than adequate if we apply it with enthusiasm and creativity.

Even the ancient *collatio* can be a new method. Our time is in many ways similar to that of our holy founder: the same restlessness, the same doubts, the same anxieties about the future. Today, as in the past, our greatest challenge is to form sound consciences. Christian fervor has all but disappeared, yet the Lord still needs laborers for His harvest. Let us turn to the *collatio*: embracing the Word of God, let us invite our brothers and sisters, let us open the door to those who hunger and thirst for Truth, that we might become authentic witnesses to Christ.

By living out the *collatio* and adhering to the Gospel without

compromise, we—sons and daughters of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria—will surely find success as we labor for the renewal both of ourselves and of society. “Running like madmen not only toward God but also toward our neighbor,” we will commemorate the centennial of the canonization of our holy founder not so much with external festivities but with a decisive turn toward holiness.

## SERMONS OR COLLATIONES

Fr. Giuseppe Cagni, CRSP

When the Sermons of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria were published for the first time in their entirety in 1952, there was still some uncertainty regarding their structure and text. Each sermon was simply divided into two parts, dogma and moral—a division that has been justly criticized. We should add that the name “sermon” was not even used by the holy founder for the meditations on the Decalogue, but only for the meditation on lukewarmness. These concerns have prompted further study, and the following are some of the conclusions.

We have only five sermons on the Decalogue, with the fifth unfinished; the first also includes a “practical application” for female religious. They were delivered in Cremona to the group known as the *Amicizia* (Friendship), which was composed of married people who were committed to personal and ecclesiastical renewal and who were striving for Christian perfection.

The question is, What was the context in which these sermons were delivered? Was it during a liturgical celebration, or during a meeting of the group? This is important to us because if they were indeed directed to the *Amicizia*, this would teach us something about the holy founder’s vision for his famous spiritual *collationes*. The texts of the sermons support this theory, because at the end of the meeting

all the participants would express and share their thoughts in a sincere and fraternal exchange of faith. With specific phrases used to identify the transition from one section to another, the holy founder urged the audience to seek a deeper understanding of each commandment so that at the end they could more profitably share their thoughts. “Let us talk about the First Commandment, concerning the honor of God. Besides what I will tell you, you should examine very carefully your own conscience” (Sermon I); “So that you would find faster the rotten part of your conscience, listen to a short presentation on the Second Commandment, and then share your thoughts” (Sermon II); “Thus pay attention to the Third Commandment so that you yourself can better talk about it” (Sermon III); “In a few words I will describe to you the Fourth Commandment.... The little I will tell you will give you the opportunity to reflect on many things on your own” (Sermon IV); Sermon V contains no such phrase because it is incomplete. The phrase used in the sermon on the Second Commandment is most significant because it makes clear reference to the thoughts that each person would express during the period of sharing. It is therefore probable that all the collationes of the *Amicizia* developed according to the following scheme:

1. The holy founder would open the meeting with a meditation on the fundamental truths of Christian life, connecting these truths to the commandments (1st: God; 2nd: life in God; 3rd: God’s spirit; 4th: charity as the “binding element of perfection”; 5th: man in his dignity and misery as a creature). The meditation was based on Scripture passages, appeals to reason, and practical experience.

2. Then he would pass to the exposition of the commandment by quoting the text from the book of Exodus. He would continue with a Patristic exegesis on the passage, as one would do in *lectio divina*, analyzing and exploring in detail the meaning of the text so as to absorb its spiritual and moral teachings.

3. Next was the practical application of the commandment. The saint would propose precise points for an examination of conscience (let us recall that he demanded from laypeople a weekly examination of conscience; see Sermon III). Emphasizing the most important points, he was awakening in the listeners a commitment to personal and social renewal.

4. Finally, the holy founder would conclude the meditation with a brief summary of his discourse then invite the people to discuss and share. We know from the historians that this last part was the most productive, since the truths they had just meditated upon were applied to daily life, and the members committed themselves to incorporating these practical applications into their personal lives, their families, and their community.

At this point we realize, with surprise and satisfaction, that the method followed by our holy founder is the one used by committed Christian groups today: enlightenment from the Word of God, analysis of the meaning of Scriptural passage to one's life, practical application, and personal and communal commitment.

*(Eco dei Barnabiti, 1991, 4)*



## **THE ZACCARIAN FAMILY**

Clerics Regular of St. Paul

Angelic Sisters of St. Paul

Laity of St. Paul

## CLERICS REGULAR OF ST. PAUL

**“Let us run like madmen not only toward God but also toward our neighbors.”**

*(St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, Letter II)*

**The Clerics Regular of Saint Paul** – are commonly called Barnabites from their first major Church in Milan, Italy, which was dedicated to Saint Barnabas.

**The Barnabites** – are Clerics Regular, that is, clerics doing any priestly work but living together under a special Rule, bound by solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

**Saint Paul** – is the patron saint of the Order, from whom the Barnabites draw inspiration in spreading the devotion to Christ Crucified and to the Holy Eucharist.

**The Order was founded** – almost 500 years ago by Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria (1502-1539), a learned and charitable medical doctor. Believing that souls were more in need of healing than bodies, he became a priest. Following the example – of their Holy Founder, every Barnabite adds the name Mary to his.

**The Barnabite Order** – consists of both priests and brothers. The Barnabites are in: Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Congo, India, Italy, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Spain, and the United States.

Visit: [www.barnabites.com](http://www.barnabites.com)

For more information contact:

### **Barnabites – USA and Canada**

1023 Swann Road, P.O. Box 167

Youngstown, New York 14174

U.S.A.

Tel. 716.754.7489

E-mail: [pmccrsp@fatimashrine.com](mailto:pmccrsp@fatimashrine.com)

### **Barnabites – India**

#192, Amrutha Nagar, 3rd Phase, 4th Main

Choodasandra Main Road

Huskur Post, Bangalore - 99

Karnataka

India

Tel. 91.80.25746286

E-mail: [barnaindiacrsp@gmail.com](mailto:barnaindiacrsp@gmail.com)

### **Barnabites – Philippines**

Saint Anthony Maria Zaccaria Seminary

360 Apitong Street

Marikina Heights, 1810 Marikina City

Philippines

Tel. 02.934.3563

E-mail: [SAMZaccariaseminary@gmail.com](mailto:SAMZaccariaseminary@gmail.com)



## ANGELIC SISTERS OF ST. PAUL

**“Unfurl your flags, my dear daughters, for Jesus Crucified is about to send you to proclaim everywhere the vital energy of the Spirit.”** (*St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, Letter V*)

**The Angelic Sisters of Saint Paul** – work in active apostolate as collaborators of the Clerics Regular of Saint Paul (Barnabites) and the Laity of Saint Paul in their mission of “renewing the Christian fervor” in the Church.

**Saint Paul** – is their protector and guide, after whom they model their life.

**The Congregation was founded** – in Milan, Italy, by the same founder as the Barnabites, Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria, and was granted the Pontifical Bull of approval on January 15, 1535.

**The Congregation of the Angelic Sisters of Saint Paul** – are inspired in their apostolic works by Mary, under the name, Mother of Divine Providence, who in her life has been a model of that motherly love, with which all who join in the Church’s apostolic mission for the regeneration of mankind should be animated.

**The Angelic Sisters** – serve in the Church in the following countries: Italy, Brazil, Belgium, Spain, United States, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo, Philippines, Portugal, Chile, Albania, Poland, Rwanda, and Indonesia.

Visit: [www.angelicsistersofstpaul.blogspot.com](http://www.angelicsistersofstpaul.blogspot.com)

For more information contact:

### **Angelic Sisters of St. Paul – USA**

4196 William Penn Hwy  
Easton, PA 18045-5067  
U.S.A.  
Tel. +1 610.258.7792

### **Angelic Sisters of St. Paul – Philippines**

314 General M. Ordoñez Street  
Marikina Heights, Marikina City  
Philippines  
Tel. +63 2.948.4477 or +63 2.941.2993  
E-mail: [angelicsisters.asp@gmail.com](mailto:angelicsisters.asp@gmail.com)  
[angelics.phil@gmail.com](mailto:angelics.phil@gmail.com)

Bulua Old Highway, Medina  
9013 Misanis Oriental  
Philippines  
Tel. +63 947.704.4823  
E-mail: [angelics.mdna@yahoo.com](mailto:angelics.mdna@yahoo.com)

### **Susteran ASP – Indonesia**

#### **Angelic Sisters of St. Paul**

Jln Wairklan Gang kanari 3  
kal. Madawat. Maumere, Flores-NTT  
Indonesia  
Tel. +62 382.22717

## LAITY OF ST. PAUL

**“I greatly desire that you become great saints, since you are well equipped to reach this goal, if you will it.”***(St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, Letter XI)*

The Laity of Saint Paul originated in the early 1500s by the initiative of Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria.

The brilliant and prophetic intuition of Anthony Mary was to understand that true holiness is achieved only with a deep “internal reform” that is required of all: priests, religious and lay people, especially married ones.

So it was that Anthony Mary Zaccaria gathered around him many married lay people, to make them grow in the knowledge of faith and in the love toward neighbors. His idea was that only through cooperation of the three states of life could the Church find the ferment of growth and renewal.

By 1986, some lay people came together and decided to submit to the Barnabite Fathers and the Angelic Sisters the project to rebuild this reality. The approval of the movement was slow and resulted in some difficulties, which were then overcome.

Today the Laity of St. Paul are a reality in many parts of Italy and abroad, and have a job-training program for its members. Their spiritual life is nourished by reading and meditating on the Scriptures, especially the letters of Saint Paul, and studying the writings of the holy founder.

Their main aim is the “internal reform,” that is, to win over “lukewarmness” which leads slowly into indifference and spiritual laziness. This internal reform is also to find the strength, passion, and enthusiasm of the true Faith understood as full trust in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Visit: [www.laicidisanpaolo.com](http://www.laicidisanpaolo.com)

For more information contact:

### **Barnabites – Canada**

St. James Parish  
231 Morden Road  
Oakville, Canada L1K 6S2  
CANADA  
Tel. 905.845.3603  
E-mail: [stjamesoak@bell.net](mailto:stjamesoak@bell.net)

## **Barnabite Publications**

Barnabite Publications commenced in 2007 with its first online publication of a newsletter entitled *Anthony Alive*. In the following years, Barnabite Publications has printed religious materials, such as brochures, pamphlets, cards, and has published translated foreign works for the use of English-speaking readers. Barnabite Publications continues to fulfill its aim of evangelization through publishing and printing materials that provide spiritual means for renewing Christian fervor in the world as envisioned by St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, founder of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul (Barnabites), Angelic Sisters of St. Paul, and the Laity of St. Paul.

Barnabite Publications depends mostly on generous donations for its publishing finances. It welcomes donations coursed through this address:

### **Barnabite Publications**

Barnabite Spiritual Center

4301 Hecktown Road

Bethlehem PA 18020, USA

E-mail: [BarnabitePublications@gmail.com](mailto:BarnabitePublications@gmail.com)

Visit us online to view Barnabite Publications:

[www.barnabites.com/barnabite-publications](http://www.barnabites.com/barnabite-publications)

[www.scribd.com/barnabitepublications](http://www.scribd.com/barnabitepublications)





## Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria

Saint Anthony Mary Zaccaria was born in Cremona, Italy in 1502. He was graduated from the University of Padua in 1524 with a degree in medicine. As he returned to Cremona, he soon realized that people, even though in need of a medical doctor, were more in need of a doctor of souls. It was in the church of St. Vitale that Anthony reformed and re-evangelized the people. In the meantime, he studied under the Dominicans and was ordained a priest on February 20, 1529. With the aid of his own spiritual director, he moved to heal the spiritual wounds in the Milan area. Anthony joined there the Oratory of Eternal Wisdom. The purpose of this prayer group was the interior renewal of self and others. Springing forth from the oratory, the *Clerics Regular of St. Paul (Barnabites)* were formed by Anthony. He also founded the *Angelic Sisters of St. Paul* for women and another group for the laity (*The Laity of St. Paul*). Together, these three groups went around the Milanese area healing the illness of spiritual ignorance, lukewarmness, and superstition. Those in authority, civil and Church, did not like them upsetting the status quo; nevertheless Anthony and his followers continued to preach with the healing power of the reformation based on the teachings of Jesus and the Letters of Saint Paul. Anthony died, surrounded by his family and confreres, in Cremona on July 5, 1539. He was named a saint by Pope Leo XIII on May 27, 1897.

The **Zaccarian Spirituality Collection** is an anthology of works on the life and teachings of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria written or compiled by recognized members of the Clerics Regular of St. Paul (Barnabites), the Angelic Sisters of St. Paul, and the Laity of St. Paul. The collection is meant to spread, promote, and renew the spirituality of St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria in the English-speaking world.

*“Consider well what I have written to you and try to practice it by deeds, not just by words.”*  
(St. Anthony M. Zaccaria, Letter 3)



**Barnabite Publications**

2013